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ABSTRACT

The struggle between the country and the city has always been a part of human history, but with the industrial revolution, large societies possessing urban attributes came into existence while the cities proper began to lose their bounded autonomy. Entire populations are now transformed into a single industrial economy, even though they may live in low density situations. A distinction must be made between the growth of cities and societal urbanization. Even in advanced industrial societies, however, large numbers of people are only one or two generations removed from the soil. Even though living in the city, they are not part of it as social reality. Education is the crucible which prepared rural man to perform the special and diverse rules of urban living, but the extent to which schools should be merely instruments of diffusion or the directors of the processes is not clear. Urbanization entails complex changes at the levels of social relations, personality, and culture, and the transition must be a gradual one. Many of our deep and unconscious attitudes toward space, time, resources, and institutions were shaped under circumstances so different that these attitudes are detrimental today; the question is whether they can be modified by education. Other questions are what new images and expectations are to be inculcated, and whether the individual can handle the overloaded repertory of roles inherent in urban society today. (MBM)

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EDUCATION AND THE TWO PHASES OF URBANIZATION

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Human history may be traced as a struggle between country and city. As the term "civilization" suggests, the struggle was unequal - the city was unable to stamp its cultural imprint on agrarian peoples but it was also inconclusive. For many centuries, cities appeared as urban islands in a rural sea, embracing only minority populations. Cities rose and fell, the rural sea remained. Rural space and urban space were clearly differentiated by the wall which separated them.

With the industrial revolution, however, the city finally won. But for its victory, the city has paid the ultimate price. It has gained the world and lost its soul, its identity as city. Historically, as source of social change, the city could be regarded as "independent variable". The city was the crucible in which the new man and the new institutions which gave rise to the modern world were fashioned. But until the industrial revolution, the influence of the city was chiefly moral. Only with the development of the industrial technology could that moral influence be translated into the functional interdependence of urban and territorial social systems. Thereby vast societies possessing important urban attributes were brought into existence while the cities proper began to lose their bounded autonomy. Increasingly they were reduced to the position of the "dependent variable", controlled by forces beyond their reach.

Some scholars have argued accordingly that the age of the city has come to an end, and they may well be right. Others, emphasizing developments such as cybernetics and nuclear power, and the social and economic changes associated with these, have characterized our era as "post-industrial". Whatever the validity of these views, a profound difference between the preindustrial growth of cities and the urbanization of entire societies since the industrial revolution is hardly to be denied. In the former instance, "urbanization" meant the transfer of persons, whether individually or as groups, from the rural sea to urban islands. Cities might grow in size and in numbers, but both were sharply limited by the existing technology. Societal

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urbanization, on the other hand, means the incorporation, and thereby the transformation, of entire populations within given territories into a single industrial economy. To be sure, the population which remains dispersed in low density nonurban patterns does not participate directly in the heterogeneity and complexity of urban encounter. Yet the mass media and the modern modes of physical movement mean that no one need to be left behind.

If we are properly to assess the "urban problem" today, it is important to distinguish between the growth of cities and societal urbanization. For while they must be seen as reciprocal phases of a single world-wide process, the social consequences of these two phases differ markedly. In the former phase, the power of the city grows; in the latter, though the size of the city settlement may increase vastly, its relative power declines. Similarly, in the first instance, the important displacements are personal and familial; in the latter, institutions and collectivities are enlarged and regrouped, though personal or familial disorganization may likewise occur. For both persons and social configurations, the scale of activity enlarges indefinitely. The enlargement of scale, and the increased complexity of networks, tends to outrun the capacity of mind and psyche. Men are overwhelmed by constellations of power well beyond their range of vision and of control.

When we look at the life situation of the majority of the human population today, however, it is evident that the proclamation of the victory of the city over the country is still premature. While uniformly accurate means of measuring and counting do not exist, perhaps no more than a third of the world's people live in settlements which can be characterized as "cities" or as "urban". Even in advanced industrial societies, where the majority of the people are classified as urban, large numbers, often the majority, are but a generation or two removed from the soil. The culture, the institutions, the language, and the consciousness, even of the industrial (or "post-industrial") societies, are still permeated with the idioms of rural-urban

conflict. Thus in effect, though the floods of the post-urban era are rushing downward upon us, we are still trying to navigate the rapids which historically have separated country from city.

In today's urban ferment, at least in the United States, these two phases or forces of urban development collide and coalesce. Among those tumbling protesting into the streets, one finds those who have come physically into the urbs, into the city as a physical container, but who were never admitted to civitas, the city as social reality. These would-be citizens have yet to undergo the early phase of urbanization. On the other hand, there are the children of urban privilege, who long ago entered the city, but who rise now to protest the disappearance of the civitas. Those without, seek entry; those within, say with Gertrude Stein, "There is no there, there."

The same confusion appears where the mighty assemble to form policy. Whether it is a question of the underprivileged in a post-industrial society, or of the "underdeveloped" among the society of nations, nothing can be more urgent than the development of those so far left behind. On the other hand, the problems confronting the "advanced" nations,in the end may be even more compelling. Clearly the mismanagement of the vast concentrations of power in these societies has already had disastrous consequences both for themselves and for the societies in earlier stages of development. Moreover, the "post-industrial" territory has yet to be mapped. The developing countries have several developmental models from which to choose. There are the Western European, the Japanese, and the Marxist models, in the last instance, in the two versions of Russia and China. However difficult it may be bring about the modernization of a given society, modernization has already occurred in various forms. The "post-industrial" society, on the other hand has still to be invented. It may well be that the disaffection especially in the United States, as expressed in what has been called the "counter-culture", can best be understood as a reaction to the early displacements of the "post-industrial" era.

In both phases of urban growth, the school has been a major tool in directed change. While many forces of communication and development interact in the process of urbanization, education is the crucible which prepares rural man to perform the special and diverse rules of urban living. The extent to which the schools, however, are instruments for the diffusion of social inventions made elsewhere rather than agents of innovation is not fully clear. Cumulatively, the education of increasing numbers of people, will produce profound changes in societal structures. But can we expect the schools, at least at primary and secondary levels, to facilitate or to direct a process as vast or sweeping as urbanization? Is it their task rather to mirror and to transmit the changes as they occur in

more profound and complex ways throughout entire societies?

These questions, reaching deeply as they do into the history and the philosophy of education, cannot be answered here. But they must be asked in the concrete instance as well as generally. I shall be content, therefore, if in the following comments I can identify a few of the issues which confront educators as they confront the questions of urbanization in their task today. Allow me to speak first of the problems surrounding the pre-urban legacy which lives on within and around us as we enter the city, then of the lineaments of the post-urban era now beginning to emerge.

The urbanization of life, which occurs in clearest form by the transfer of people from country, entails complex changes at the levels of social relations, personality, and culture. As in the case of international migrations, "naturalization" is a long process, likely to extend over several generations. In-migrants into cities may find themselves deprived prematurely of the sustaining ties of kinship, neighbors, or friends, or of the support of the simple economy and institutions upon which they could rely in the rural setting. On the other hand, they may cling to these at the expense of their incorporation into the new structures or institutions of the city. In any case the transition must be a gradual one, and various strains arise where for whatever reason, the needs for gradual transition cannot be met.

Usually, however, the population of a city is highly heterogenous precisely in terms of the stage of urbanization. A classification continuum might be proposed for the ranking of the entire population of a city or a metropolis, ranging from those just arrived from farm or village, with no urban skill or experience, to persons whose ancestors may have been urban for ten generations or more. Often, however, this distinction is buried in the categories of social class, or in contrast between ghetto and suburb. Differences arising from length of urban residence

are both deep and subtle, though they are subject to modification by other influences as well. For example, in the United States, the lower the socioeconomic class and the more "rural" the urban resident, the greater the likelihood that the locality or neighborhood figures importantly in the way he organizes his life. In the early stages of urban renewal this fact was not recognized. By the same token, the higher the socioeconomic class, and the longer the urban residence, the less the likelihood that the immediare locality will determine the social space of the person in question.

This question quickly takes collective form. The allocation of the urban residents in the urban social system is widely regarded as a function of the market economy. Though the claims of this theory may be excessive, the fact remains that urban social organization in Western societies presupposes considerable interchangeability among the population. Indeed, this obtains at all levels of the society. Already when the American constitution was being written, there was considerable distrust of special groups such as ethnic groups within the larger society. These, it was thought, would inhibit the achievement of the equality without which the society could not operate. But the question has never been resolved. To this day we feel deeply ambivalent on these matters. Should public policy tolerate the persistence of pre-urban, communal groupings, expressed especially in residential and educational patterns, but intruding on the political process as well? Or in urban planning, whether in the renewal of old towns, or in the building of new ones, should pre-urban, communal preferences be accommodated even at the risk of conflict or disruption within the city?

Beyond particularities of this sort, however, lie the central myths or images of the society, those images which express and mediate the core self-understanding concerning the society which the members share. Here the Americans may confront a common problem, though in a form peculiar to each country's history. In the

case of the United States, attention has frequently been drawn to the impact of the frontier, or as others would have it, to the experience of what seemed to be almost unbounded space, on our corporate consciousness. It has even been proposed that in America "space has played the part that time has played in the older cultures of the world." While in older societies, whose land had long since been occupied and filled, the tragic load of the past had to be born and resolved, until the end of the nineteenth century, Americans could simply go West when problems seemed untractable.

The rush to the suburbs, the ranch style house, the urban sprawl, the addiction to freeway and automobile, all these and more are hardly accidental developments. In any case, a former Secretary of Commerce once complained about efforts to curb the urban freeway program because this threatened "'our right to come and go as we please...a heritage from frontier days.'" It takes more than a quotation, of course, even from a former Cabinet member, to establish a point. What does seem clear, however, is that many of our deep and unconscious attitudes toward space, time, resources, and institutions were shaped under circumstances so vastly different that these attitudes are detrimental today. The question confronting educators is whether such attitudes can be modified in the educational process, or are they imbedded so deeply that only new catastrophic experiences can modify them? Can education directly engage and reshape the unconscious material which unites a society?

Turning now in the other direction, we confront questions vastly more difficult. Assuming that we could dispose of the pre-urban legacy of culture, of institutions, and of perceptions, what new images or expectations are to be inculcated? Do we accept an extreme view of the "cultural lag" theory which permits technology to the pacemaker for change, and which would make of the educator an adjuster of culture to that pace of change? If neither the culture of the past nor the technology of the present is to dictate the destiny of post-urban man, whence the

models that are to guide us?

Questions as these are the stuff of conflict in modern societies, and can never be arbitrated by educators or educational institutions alone. If the shape of the "post-urban" world cannot yet be etched, some problems which require solution can already be identified. Some of these lie directly in the path of the educational process. One increasingly urgent task is the education of post-urban man to cope with complexity. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that the magnetism of opportunity, diversity, and choice has attracted people into cities ever since they arose. The social and cultural heterogeneity found in cities is reflected in the urban personality. The urban person can handle with comfort a greater repertory of segmental roles than can his rural counterpart.

Despite the attractions of heterogeneity, however, Americans, e.g., have frequently displayed strong ambivalence toward the city. They have sought its advantages, without understanding or accepting the full consequences of heterogeneity complexity. At this very moment of urban unrest, large numbers of Americans seem to draw back more than ever, pursuing vainly the simplicity and security which we can never regain. Certainly there are limits to the range of role complexities which the psyche can manage, and the malaise of our time may indicate that these limits are being violated. On the other hand, the understanding and the management of complexity are in part the functions of socialization and education. The point is not that we should strain the human personality to accommodate a runaway technology. It is rather that the educational curriculum and experience need systematic and critical testing to see to it that the young, indeed persons of all ages, develop a genuine grasp of urban complexity. Only when complexity and heterogeneity are understood and embraced can the limits likewise be defined, and urban institutions and life styles developed accordingly.

Role multiplicity, however, is simply the reverse side of the identity question. An overloaded repertory of roles inevitably jeopardizes the core identity of the self, and its isolation from the identity forming matrices of primary and communal groups. As we all know, only the abridging of the pre-urban communal structures - family, kinship, locality groups and the like - makes modern man available for large-scale, complex social organization. In certain respects, the walled medieval city maximized both communal solidarity and secondary complexity. the large scale, post-urban societies, however, call into question not only the pre-urban communal legacy, which already was attenuated in the city, but the neighborhood patterns and institutions which had achieved varying degrees of viability in the industrial city.

It is above all the schools which are caught up in the struggle for communal survival or redefinition in the post-urban society. Institutionally a case can be made to use the school as the principal tool in the construction and maintenance of neighborhood, and thus for local control of schools. Yet the resulting homogeneity, which provides a clear anchor for identity at one level, can quickly lead to parochial conflict. Indeed, it is precisely such homogeneity of class or race or culture which ill-equips the pupil for life in heterogeneous societies.

At the structural or institutional level, the symbiosis of homogeneity and heterogeneity in the social environment depends upon the functions of the larger society. These the educational process cannot make or break. The school controversy rages because schools seek or are asked to solve problems which they cannot directly control. But educators can both educate for homogeneity and complexity, and articulate for the larger society the complex problems here at stake. One cannot feel that these tasks have as yet been adequately addressed.

Finally, if the age of the city in its pre-industrial autonomy has passed, the polis, the reality created by free men in reciprocal action, cannot be permitted to pass. Now is the time to resist the pressure to have done with the classical legacy in the post-industrial worl. This is not a plea for the revival of dead languages in the curriculum, though these surely have their place. We need to reconnect rather with the original understanding of the polis which, in the words of Werner Jaeger, gives every man, "besides his private life, sort of second life, his bios politikos." True, new spheres have meanwhile arisen between the private and the political. Both the private and the civic or public sheres have been vastly enhanced since the Greek urban experiment. But the Greeks disdained the private man, who had no public identity. He possessed only that which was his own, when the term "idiot". The freedom and the affluence of the post-industrial world makes possible widespread "idiocy", in the ancient Greek sense. Unless the idiocy of the members of affluent societies can be overcome, the outlook is hardly bright. Moralizing, however, will avail but little. It is a question of the requirements and the rewards of social systems. But it is also a question of values and life-styles, and if education was a tool in the urbanization of persons in the early phase of urbanization, it can help to pioneer the rebuilding of the post-~~industrial~~ urban polis.